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ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

COMPREHENSIVE TEST-BAN TREATY

Letter dated 9 September 1996 from the Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

The delegation of Australia has circulated, in document A/50/1027 of 26 August 1996, the text of a draft comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

The draft circulated by Australia in document A/50/1027 is the same text as that discussed at Geneva in the Conference on Disarmament, on which a consensus could not be reached. This fact will be reflected in the report of the Conference on Disarmament to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session.

It is the view of the Government of India that document A/50/1027 has several shortcomings and does not fulfil the mandate that was given to the Conference on Disarmament, which was to negotiate intensively a universal and multilaterally and effectively verifiable comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, which would contribute effectively to the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons in all its aspects, to the process of nuclear disarmament and therefore to the enhancement of international peace and security.

In India's view, several amendments would be required for the draft treaty circulated as Australia's national paper to meet the mandate given by the Conference on Disarmament. These would include the following:

(i) Add the following new preambular paragraph:

"Emphasizing that the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, to be meaningful in the context of a disarmament treaty, must be considered an important step in the process leading to the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons within a specific time-frame."

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(ii) Add the following new paragraphs in article I:

"Each State Party undertakes to refrain from any activity relating to the development, refinement and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons."

"All States Parties commit themselves to taking effective measures for global nuclear disarmament by commencing negotiations on a phased programme of nuclear disarmament and for the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework."

(iii) Replace article XIV, Entry into force, by the following:

"This treaty shall enter into force 180 days after the date of the deposit of the sixty-fifth instrument of ratification, but in no case earlier than two years after its opening for signature."

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly under agenda items 8 and 65.

(Signed) Prakash SHAH